

File #

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## THE DUXBURY LIBRARY

(This is the first of two articles on the Duxbury Free Library researched and compiled by Mrs. Dorothy Wentworth, our Town Historian at the suggestion of the Library Study Committee. -- Ed.)

The earliest mention of a public library in Duxbury is in the Town Records in April 1889, when a vote of thanks was extended to Henry Winsor of Philadelphia for the "generous bequest of \$5000 for a free library for the benefit of Duxbury." This gift was by deed of trust to six men who were to elect a seventh and fill all vacancies. They were to use the income from the fund for the purposes of a public library. The income did not allow for a building so all through the summer of 1889 a building must have been the topic of many meetings and discussions. One of the conditions of this gift was "No part of income shall be used for the purchase of novels or romances. It shall not prevent the purchase of periodicals containing articles which published in a volume might come within the denomination of novels and romances."

On Oct. 22, 1889 Georgianna Buckham Wright and George W. Wright conveyed to Hambleton E. Smith, John S. Loring, Elbridge H. Chandler, Frederick B. Knapp, John H. Parker, William J. Wright, and Horatio Adams, all of the Towns of Duxbury and Kingston, in the Commonwealth aforesaid, as Trustees of the Duxbury Free Library to be established by the, a certain, lot, or parcel of land situated in said Duxbury together with the dwelling-house situated thereon on the southerly side of the highway leading from Powder Point, so called, to the Duxbury and Cohasset R. R. Station. . ."

The land so conveyed was three eighths of an acre and the building was a dwelling house across the street from the home of the donors, where they had previously quartered guests and visiting relatives. It stood on the site of the present library building.

Appended to the deed was a paragraph saying that the library was a memorial to a son, George Buckham Wright, and an explanation of intent: "It is our wish that the Trustees shall arrange for the use of the property above conveyed as in their judgment shall be for the best interests of the citizens of the Town of Duxbury, favoring social gatherings, such as meetings of the Rural Society, Sewing Circles, Reading Clubs, and those tending to the education and elevation of our Town's people." In the deed it is further stated that "If Library Association falls or ceases to occupy premises for library or reading room, premises shall revert to Wrights and their heirs."

At the next Town Meeting, March 10, 1890, a resolution was passed, thanking Mrs. Wright for the gift of a library building. It included a tribute to her that is at the same time a tribute to the pen of the Town Clerk, for he described her as "a lady of winning manners, whose personal accomplishments were only equalled by the goodness of her heart, over whose life there had fallen the shadow of grief that marred her earthly happiness. . ."

On March 7, 1892, in Town Meeting, the Trustees of Duxbury Free Library were authorized to receive from the executor of the state of Henry W. Hathaway, \$3000 left for the purchase of books. Other sums have been received over the years from estates and by gift. The Town first appropriated money for the library

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in 1891, when an item for \$200 was in the budget. It was increased to \$300 in 1892, omitted for four years, restored to \$250 in 1897 and appropriated with more or less regularity since in increasing amounts.

Also in the Town Meeting of March 10, 1890, the last article read: "Will the Town order the removal of the office for the Town Officers from the Almshouse to the Library building?" The vote was negative on this day but someone must have been persistent for on March 5, 1894 it was voted ". . . not over \$1500 for preparing the Selectman's Room at the Public Library."

Thus the beginning of the Duxbury Free Library was an idea conceived by citizens of the Town furthered by bequests of money and the gift of property, and carried out by the Board of Trustees.

# Duxbury Clipper

